

**"Balance"**  
**Commencement Speech**  
**By Curtis J. Moody**  
**The Ohio State University**  
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Giving honor to the good Lord above, President Gee, members of the Board, Deans, faculty members, families, friends and especially our honored graduates. I am deeply, deeply, deeply proud to be here today hopefully as a voice of encouragement to you as you continue the journey you began so many years ago with your education at The Ohio State University.

Having sat where you sit many, many years ago, I am very aware of the anxiety you experience. I don't have to tell you that this is an important day. Everyone here – not just you, but also your family and your friends has invested a lot of themselves in getting you to your seat in this place.

So I'm not going to give you a long cookie-cutter speech that you will eventually forget, especially because my research tells me that no one remembers what their commencement speaker said, let alone who she or he was. Instead, I'm going to give you a few personal truths from my own OSU formed experience. After all, you've spent all these years learning and striving....so right now it's my intention to give you the "Therefore".

You are starting a new chapter in your life, you are moving from an intellectual environment to a world which offers many, many possibilities. You have passed the test of university life and that allows you to be here as graduates. You will seek new horizons that are full of unknown challenges both positive and yet sometimes negative.

Don't be discouraged with the negative challenges or environment that you find yourselves in; some created by circumstances that none of us can change. Even under the most challenging situations, **ALWAYS BE ENCOURAGED.** I have lived that encouragement.

My story is one that is similar to many that you have heard before. I came from a low income family and low income neighborhood I dreamed of becoming an architect, a career path that my school counselors felt was too lofty a goal for me to achieve.

I was counseled to pursue a less ambitious path to become a draft person who would work for an architect. It was felt that architects not only looked different than me, but also were selected to design buildings by people who would not select someone like me.

Looking back, I think what they failed to see was how I dealt with challenges; how I was motivated to achieve what seemed at the time to be insurmountable academic milestones to reach my committed goal. I think they didn't see the balance of my abilities which is the theme I want to discuss today. Seeking balance in your life.

Your balance or equilibrium is not always immediately known by you or others until circumstances help to reveal your true character. Sometimes trying circumstances or inordinate pressures force an individual to react or be motivated to move in a different direction or reach higher levels of performance than they might normally achieve.

It is not an attribute that can always be seen in ones demeanor or daily routine. However, once realized, it speaks to our true innermost nature. **Who we are.**

It speaks to our character. It speaks to our integrity. The need to balance our intellectual talents with common sense virtues can not be overstated. Sometimes this side of our being, our personality is developed through our interaction with others, our successes and failures or when finding that helping others through their trials and tribulations often softens our own. We also find that success; is not our only teacher

When I was ready to begin my college career, I was fortunate to have been offered scholarships for three different sports at various universities. However, none of those schools offered architecture as a major. Therefore, I made a tough decision to give up the sports scholarships and attend The Ohio State University where I could study architecture. I walked on to the Ohio State basketball team, and won a scholarship grant after my freshman year. I could not have dreamed that when I was sitting on the bench in St. Johns Arena as a walk-on basketball player "who didn't play very much", that not only would I finish my degree that I would one day design a new arena to replace the one where I played, the building where you are housed today "The Schottenstein Center".

Some of life's grand experiences can truly be considered a measure of success. It certainly hit me just a few weeks ago. Knowing then that I would be standing on this stage today, I stood on another stage at the University of Michigan speaking to a group of students at the School of Architecture, having traveled there from my hotel room at The Campus Inn, in a taxi-cab called Amazing Blue, which was decorated with the Michigan football teams' winged helmet.

Just think....a Buckeye welcomed in Wolverine country – I **HAVE TRULY ARRIVED.**

One of the key things The Ohio State University has assisted me in finding & maintaining “**balance in my life**”. In my profession, a great architect is a visionary, a dreamer, coupled with the right balance of realism. You need to have balance between your personal and professional life and you need to know that you cannot always accomplish everything on your own. This university is and has been a good place to learn about balance – it provides a diverse array of activities and people, in addition to a rich learning environment. The Ohio State University educated me, and then later deemed me qualified to design some of its most prestigious buildings.

My early college experience might have originally appeared as a hardship, but in reality, it helped set my course for the continuation of the journey that I had begun. The University, faculty, other students and coaches taught me the true meaning or definition of team, “**TOGETHER, EACH ACCOMPLISHES MORE.**” My understanding of this concept has allowed me to work with others in a more positive way understanding that I alone don't always possess the attributes that are necessary to accomplish some of life's most important tasks. I have at times needed to seek the help of others to provide the balance to obtain those goals.

In the long run, our life has to be about service of some kind, and can be greatly improved if we understand, “**ME, WE, and THEE**”.

We all start with the “**ME**” -- I desire to be successful. **WE** then begin to understand that my success is going to be better served with the participation of others. By me helping and working with others, “**WE**” then can meet challenges that “**ME**” cannot. Coming together as “**WE**,” eventually impacts and helps our much broader community, “**THEE**”.

I spoke of service a minute ago, and I don't want you to be confused with what that means. It reminds me of a story of a young kid who was in church standing in one of the hallways facing a wall and looking at many pictures on the wall but staring at one specific plaque that he just couldn't take his eyes off. He kept staring and staring until the Pastor decided to question the young boy as to what was so intriguing. The boy looked at the wall, pointed to a specific plaque and asked "what does this mean". The Pastor looked at the plaque which had many names and the imprint of an American Flag and eagle, the Pastor said, "Those – my son, are people who have died in service" and the kid looked at the Pastor with questioning eyes and said, "was that the 8:00 or 10:00 service."

Many of you have created friendships and long lasting relationships whose full value will only be revealed to you over time. I encourage you to continue to nurture and strengthen those friendships which you have established here and elsewhere, they may help you face some of life's most intriguing challenges. We don't have to watch the news; we can get it from many different sources, the feel of the depressed economy. The hard fact is that many of you sitting here today are wondering if there is a job out there for you. Many of you are listening to politicians bicker about minor points; more concerned about protecting their own job versus looking out for those that they have been sent there to protect. There are many discouraging issues in our world today. These issues can also be attributed to a lack of balance. Some of these leaders are our most intellectually gifted, and yet are not balanced with good old fashion common sense, resulting in what some call **"DUMB SMART PEOPLE."**

These conditions are not going to change by just wishing, or believing that others will make the effort for us. And just saying I'll try to do something about it isn't good enough. One just has to recall the words of that great philosopher of Star Wars fame, Yoda who stated – **DON'T TRY - EITHER "DO" OR "DO NOT."**

I believe the class here today is our best chance to offer those unorthodox and unconventional approaches to many of the problems and challenges we face today. Living within the OSU environment has prepared you beyond the classroom. The size and diversity of OSU from academics to social opportunities, cultural endeavors and yes, even successes and disappointments, has given you a taste of our global society in which you will engage. **“YOU ARE PREPARED.”**

I believe that sometimes we do face hardships which may seem greater than we can handle, however those hardships are sometimes the exact thing you need to achieve the extraordinary. They provide balance. I encourage no one to purposefully seek out disaster for character building. However, I do believe that some things that you will experience even the negative ones will be a source of strength as you improve that which we already have.

You have already achieved a level of success by graduating in this class of 2010. The worldwide recognition and prestige of this great university can be seen in the business districts of New York, the historic streets of Rome, or even in the hustle and bustle of downtown Tokyo; where if one shouts **OH**, they can expect to hear **IO** in return.

These connections are yours to use to enhance your journey. I recognize that graduates of this university continue to achieve and make their marks all over the world. **AND SO WILL YOU.**

GRADUATES! I challenge you to change our world by being successful in ways never dreamed of before. I challenge you not to just try and work with others for greater success, but to do that which makes it happen. I challenge you to re-balance the world not only with your intellect but with your character!

**Thank you!!**